

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SSC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /073 W
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P R 221010Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3011
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 18084

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: CABINET RESHUFFLE

SUMMARY. A CABINET SHUFFLE IS REASONABLY CERTAIN
NOVEMBER 30 OR SHORTLY THEREAFTER. THROUGH IT,
FUKUDA HOPES TO CREATE FRESH PARTY IMAGE AS PRELUDE
TO EXPECTED 1978 LOWER HOUSE ELECTION. CHANCES ARE
GOOD THAT ECONOMIC PORTFOLIOS (FINMIN, MITIMIN, AND
EPA CHIEF) WILL CHANGE; FONMIN HATOYAMA HAS ROUGHLY
50-50 CHANCE OF STAYING. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER MONTHS OF RUMORS, PRIMIN FUKUDA NOVEMBER 20
HINTED BROADLY THAT HE WOULD SHUFFLE CABINET SHORTLY
AFTER NOVEMBER 25 DIET CLOSE. SHUFFLE IS ALMOST CERTAIN
TO OCCUR DURING WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28. IF FONMIN HATOYAMA
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GOES AHEAD WITH REGULARLY SCHEDULED MINISTERIAL TALKS
IN LONDON NOVEMBER 28-29, MOST LIKELY TIME FRAME
IS NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 2.

2. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR SHUFFLE NOW. FUKUDA,
WITH SUBSTANTIAL DEBTS TO ANTI-MIKI ALLIANCE AT TIME
OF LAST CABINET SHUFFLE, NOW WISHES TO PUT HIS PERSONAL

IMPRESS ON CABINET AND IMPROVE ITS IMAGE IN ANTICIPATION OF 1978 LOWER HOUSE ELECTION AND BID TO STAY ON AS LDP PRESIDENT (AND PRIMIN) BEYOND PRESENT TERM ENDING DECEMBER 1978. MAIN TEST OF SUCCESS WILL BE WHETHER TANAKA INFLUENCE IN CABINET CAN BE REDUCED. OTHER REASONS FOR SHUFFLE INCLUDE: LDP LEADERS' TERMS (EXCEPT FOR PRIMIN) EXPIRE NEXT MONTH; PRESSURE FROM MIDDLE RANKING CONSERVATIVES TO ENTER CABINET IS INTENSE; AND CERTAIN PROBLEM CABINET MEMBERS, SUCH AS ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY CHIEF SHINTARO ISHIHARA, SHOULD BE REPLACED SOON.

3. WITH DIET STILL IN SESSION, HOWEVER, OUTLINES OF NEW CABINET REMAIN DIM BY LEADERSHIP DESIGN. IT SEEMS REASONABLY CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT CANDIDATES WILL BE PROPOSED AS USUAL THROUGH "FORMER" FACTIONS AND THAT OVERALL CABINET WILL REFLECT ROUGH FACTIONAL BALANCE.

4. MORE SPECIFICALLY:

--TOP LDP POSTS. OHIRA IS CERTAIN TO REMAIN AS LDP SEC GEN AND ESAKI AND KOMOTO ARE LIKELY TO STAY ON AS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN AND POLICY AFFAIRS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, RESPECTIVELY. THIS WOULD LEAVE BASIC DIVISION OF LABOR BETWEEN FUKUDA, RESPONSIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT, AND OHIRA, RESPONSIBLE FOR PARTY, ESSENTIALLY INTACT. POSSIBILITY REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT ESAKI AND KOMOTO WILL

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BE REPLACED.

--CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY. SONODA APPEARS LIKELY TO STAY ON. SHINTARO ABE'S NAME IS OCCASIONALLY MENTIONED, BUT HE IS DOING SUPERB JOB AS LDP DIET POLICY CHAIRMAN.

--FONMIN. AMONG NAMES BEING MENTIONED ARE INCUMBENT IICHIRO HATOYAMA, FORMER FONMIN TOSHIO KIMURA, FORMER MITIMIN TOSHIO KOMOTO, FORMER FONMIN KIICHI MIYAZAWA, AND ABE. WHILE HATOYAMA IS TOO LACKLUSTER FOR MANY TASTES, OTHER CANDIDATES TOO HAVE PROBLEMS. KIMURA IS TOO PRO-CHINA FOR LDP RIGHT WING, KOMOTO LACKS FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERIENCE, AND MIYAZAWA, IT IS THOUGHT, MIGHT WELL RUN INTO OPPOSITION FROM BOTH OHIRA AND PRC. UPSHOT IS THAT HATOYAMA, WITH ALL HIS PROBLEMS, MAY HAVE SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN 50-50 CHANCE TO REMAIN. RETENTION WOULD ALSO BOOST CHANCES OF HIS BID LATER FOR TOKYO GOVERNOR.

--ECONOMIC PORTFOLIOS. FINMIN, MITIMIN, AND EPA CHIEF PORTFOLIOS APPEAR LIKELY TO CHANGE HANDS. FOR FINMIN, FUKUDA IS SAID TO BE SEEKING SOMEONE REASONABLY

PLIANT, WHICH RAINS DOUBTS ABOUT CHANCES OF KOMOTO AND MIYAZAWA, BOTH OF WHOM WANT JOB. SUNEI UCHIDA AND SADANORI YAMANAKA ARE ALSO BEING MENTIONED. FOR MITIMIN, KOMOTO, YOSHIO SAKURAUCHI, TOKUSABURO KOSAKA AND SONODA, IF HE DOES NOT STAY NON IN PRESENT POSITION, ARE RUMORED. FOR EPA, THERE IS NO CERTAINTY, BUT MIYAZAWA AND HATOYAMA ARE OCCASIONALLY DISCUSSED.

--OTHER PORTFOLIOS. JUSMIN SETOYAMA AND AGMIN SUZUKI SEEM LIKELY TO STAY ON. REMAINING PORTFOLIOS, INCLUDING JDA, WILL PROBABLY BE SHARED OUT AMONG CONSERVATIVES WITHOUT CABINET EXPERIENCE WHO HAVE REQUISITE FIVE-SIX TERMS OF SENIORITY AND FACTION LEADER'S BLESSING.
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5. COMMENT. SITUATION IS UNUSUALLY FLUID AT THIS POINT, MAINLY BECAUSE DIET IS STILL IN SESSION AND LEADERSHIP DOES NOT WISH TO COMPLICATE DIET IS STILL IN SESSION AND LEADERSHIP DOES NOT WISH TO COMPLICATE DIET MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH COMPLEX OF POSSIBILITIES INEVITABLY MAKES PREDICTION CHANCY, SITUATION SHOULD CLARIFY CONSIDERABLY AFTER NOVEMBER 25 DIET CLOSE.
MANSFIELD

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THROUGH IT
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